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Motivations and Needs of Volunteers within School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) Programs

Jocelyn Bandley, Tyson J. Sorensen

Research Background

- Shortage of trained agriculture teachers
- SBAE is a demanding profession
- Understanding volunteer motives in SBAE programs and training needs can provide insight and recommendation for preservice teacher training, Inservice teacher professional development, and stakeholder programming

Research Purpose & Objectives

Identify the motivations and needs of volunteers within SBAE programs

1. Describe the characteristics of SBAE volunteers
2. Describe SBAE volunteer motivations
3. Describe training needs of SBAE volunteers

Research Methods

- Anonymous online survey was sent to SBAE volunteers in Utah and Oregon
- Developed around 3 RO's
- 30-item Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale (5-point Likert-type scale)
- 129 respondents, 17 did not meet the criteria = 112 usable surveys

Research Findings

Objective 1:

- 72% female, 28% male respondents
- $M = 11.58$ years as an SBAE volunteer
- Most common volunteer role reported was a member of an organized FFA Alumni group (36.8%)

Objective 2:

- Most volunteer efforts were on FFA activities ($M = 56.49\%$ of the time)
- Three greatest motives for volunteering:
 - Career motives
 - Protective motives
 - Enhancement motives

Objective 3:

- Reported topics for training:
 - Opportunities and resources available
 - Volunteer leadership-related topics

Research Conclusions

- Most SBAE volunteers are members of the FFA Alumni and their volunteer efforts are on FFA activities
- SBAE volunteers are mostly motivated because of the benefits to their own career pursuits
- SBAE volunteers have several professional and volunteer training needs

Recommendations for Practice

- State and national alumni organizations should work closely with SBAE teachers and volunteer groups to provide training and needed resources
- Trainings to preservice teachers from teacher educators regarding the utilization and management of volunteers in SBAE programs

